

WASHINGTON – Today, Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons, and Rep. John Carney (all D-Del.) hailed a recent grant award to help Delaware seniors root out waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare. The Delaware Partners of the Senior Medicare Patrol will receive \$172,138 to help fund its operation in the First State, the Department of Health and Human Services announced earlier this week.

Billions of dollars are lost every year to abuses within the Medicare system. The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a national organization that enlists retired senior citizens to serve as volunteers to provide information and help other Medicare beneficiaries seek appropriate courses of action when they suspect fraud, waste or abuse of the Medicare program. SMP projects also work to resolve Medicare beneficiaries' complaints of potential fraud in partnership with state and national fraud control/consumer protection entities, including Medicare contractors, state Medicaid fraud control units, state attorneys general, the Office of the Inspector General and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"The Delaware Partners of the Senior Medicare Patrol continue to empower seniors through encouraging increased awareness and understanding of how to protect themselves from the economic and health-related consequences of Medicare and Medicaid fraud, error and abuse," said the Delegation. "Over the 12 successful years of this program, thousands of Medicare beneficiaries have been provided with resources to help them better understand their Medicare coverage. Medicare beneficiaries in Delaware have peace of mind in knowing that SMP's staff and volunteers are always available to assist them and answer their questions. This grant will help ensure that the Delaware Partners of the Senior Medicare Patrol can continue its important work in the First State."

Since 1997, the Administration on Aging has funded SMP projects to recruit and train retired professionals and other senior citizens on how to recognize and report instances or patterns of health care fraud. In addition, they are made aware of how threats to financial independence and health status may occur when citizens are victimized by fraudulent schemes. These SMP projects partner with the aging network, as well as community, faith-based, tribal and health care organizations. Together, they utilize a variety of outreach strategies to educate and empower their peers to identify, prevent and report health care fraud. Currently, the SMP program funds 54 projects in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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